



KCPD supports family new to KC

The story of one family getting back on their feet illustrates both how KCPD's social worker program is changing lives and the generosity of the department's officers.

At about 2 a.m. June 28, a security guard in a parking garage in the Power and Light District downtown called police to report a family sleeping in the garage stairwell. Central Patrol Division Sergeant A.J. Henry responded. He found Chantre Russ and her three children, ages 4, 2 and 7 months.

He learned they had arrived in Kansas City two days before on a bus from California. The father of Russ' eldest child had been murdered, and she said she and her children needed to leave. They have no family in Kansas City, but they came here because they'd received a letter from the Housing Authority of Kansas City about public housing.

Sergeant Henry opted not to call the Jackson County Children's Division for fear they would split up the family.

"They'd already been through enough," he said.

He called around the city looking for shelters with openings for the family, but all were full. Then he called KCPD Social Services Coordinator Gina English. She came to the scene in the middle of the night. She also called shelters and only found an opening in Topeka, Kan. She and the officers said that wouldn't work.

Not knowing what else to do, Sgt. Henry, English and Officers Devin Jackson, Ian Morris and Jacob Phillips pooled the cash they had with them to get the family a hotel room. They installed car seats in English's vehicle, and she took the family to a hotel. Family members of the officers brought the Russ family diapers, wipes, clothes, hygiene products, toys and food. Through Truman Medical Center and Missouri Highway Patrol, the family got car seats to keep.

It was all a little overwhelming for the mother, English said.

"I told her that, 'I need you to know this is not charity. This is love. This is support,'" English said. "... She just needed a support



Central Patrol officers and KCPD social workers helped Chantre Russ and her three children get on their feet after they came to Kansas City.

and families in need to the resources already available in the community that will help them thrive. Chief Richard Smith implemented the social worker program with a grant from the Hall Family Foundation and funds from the city. A social worker now is assigned to all six patrol division stations to assist officers who encounter people who need help beyond what law enforcement can offer.

team. She just needed someone to cheer her on and remind her that she's made it this far, and she can continue to go farther."

The next morning, the KCPD social workers did their magic. They got the Russ family into Sheffield Place, a shelter and social services agency for mothers and their children. Other community organizations that helped out include Healing Pathways, Hope Faith Ministries, the Community Assistance Council and Holiday Inn. The Russ family has now been approved for public housing and is awaiting a unit to come open.

The family came to the July Board of Police Commissioners Meeting to thank police. Ms. Russ also wrote a letter to the editor at the Kansas City Star.

"I have been through a lot, and I have never had support from anybody like what the Kansas City Police Department and its social workers have given me," she wrote. "... I am happy that my story has shined the light on the police department, and that it will let the community know that there are officers who care."

English has repeatedly said KCPD social workers connect individuals

Pg. 2 "The Clues Brothers" return

Pg. 3 Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association
News in Brief

Pg. 4 Officially Speaking
Upcoming Events

“The Clues Brothers” have returned

“The Clues Brothers” are back, and they’re helping crack murder cases that have gone unsolved over the last few years.

“My daughter said we should call ourselves ‘The Clues Brothers’ because she said I was getting the band back together,” Retired Sergeant Dave Bernard said.

Bernard retired from KCPD in 2011 as a homicide sergeant who had reached somewhat legendary status for his investigative skills. In his retirement, he attended lunches for retired KCPD employees.

“I would go to the retiree lunch and see these homicide guys with all that experience, and they’re not really doing anything with it,” Bernard said.

Then he and Chief Richard Smith met for lunch in January 2018. Bernard pitched the idea

of having retired homicide detectives come back as volunteers to review unsolved cases for new leads. Chief Smith welcomed it. So Bernard started reaching out to people, including his former sergeant and mentor, Retired Sergeant Troy Cole. Cole retired from KCPD in 1997. He gained notoriety for his work on the Bob Berdella serial killer investigation. After going through the hiring process all over again to work as auxiliary volunteers, they’ve been reviewing unsolved homicide cases dating back to 2013 for the last few weeks.

The four homicide squad sergeants submitted cases to Bernard and Cole that they wanted extra review on. They each work five cases at a time.

“Looking at the cases now, we get really excited and say, ‘This is a key person who has to be interviewed; let’s go talk to them,’” Bernard said.

But they’re leaving the interview part to the present-day detectives. Cole and Bernard said their job is to review the case file for any possible leads.

“It’s purely brain work on our end,” Bernard said. “We’re reviewing everything and making suggestions for follow-up.”

With homicide detectives’ current caseload, it’s not something they’ve had as

geants’ work has been well-received.

“It has provided the department yet another way to fully investigate these cases, and our ultimate hope is to bring peace to grieving families,” Captain Kirchhoff said.

Cole said much has changed in homicide investigations since he retired more than 20 years ago.

“Now there’s DNA, cameras mounted

on every corner, social media, and cell phones,” Cole said. “We’ve been going over a lot of phone records today.”

Cole said most cases in his career were solved by interviews and the occasional fingerprint.

“But the basics of investigation haven’t changed,” Bernard said. They’re still looking for the right person who knows the right thing.

“In some of the cases we’ve gone over, those people are de-

ceased because they’ve become victims of homicides themselves,” Cole said.

Cole and Bernard already have submitted their recommendations on seven cases. Some look like they can be solved, and some don’t, they said. But even on those where a resolution looks unlikely, Bernard said their work is valuable because the department can say it has done everything it can do to solve the case, to include having two retired, experienced investigators go over it.

Cole and Bernard come to Headquarters a couple of days a week to review cases. They said everyone has been very helpful and welcoming, and they’re having a lot of fun. But one thing is definitely different.

“It’s been really nice to see the renovations,” Cole said. “This certainly isn’t anything like the second floor we used to work in.”



Retired Homicide Sergeants Troy Cole and David Bernard have come back as auxiliary volunteers to review unsolved homicide cases from the past five years and make recommendations for current detectives to follow up on.

much time to do as they’d like.

“The detectives are just as dedicated and talented as they’ve ever been, but they’re swamped,” Bernard said.

He and Cole said that while the number of homicides hasn’t really changed since their tenure, (“It goes in cycles”) the number of homicide detectives is lower. Bernard said he was worried about how his and Cole’s review of the cases might be received by homicide detectives because no one wants their work to be second-guessed.

“But it’s been just the opposite,” Bernard said. “Detectives have been coming up to us and saying, ‘When you’re through with the list you’re going through now, I’d like you to take a look at this one.’”

Homicide Unit commander Captain Keith Kirchhoff agreed that the retired ser-

News in Brief

Social services coordinator gets state award

KCPD Social Services Coordinator Gina English was named the Missouri Peace Officers Association's Non-Sworn Law Enforcement Member of the Year on June 22. She was honored for the impact she has made at KCPD and on the lives of many in Kansas City. (See p. 1 for an example!)

Police win Battle for Blood

Police beat fire in the metro-wide Battle for Blood to benefit the Community Blood Center in June. Police had 351 blood donors versus fire's 291. The KCPD hosted blood drives at Headquarters and the Police Academy in support of the effort.

Crime Lab hosts Take Your Dog to Work Day



The Kansas City Regional Crime Lab once again hosted plenty of playful pups in their annual Take Your Dog to Work Day fundraiser for the Animal Rescue Alliance on June 22. (The dogs stayed out of the evidence processing areas.)

Alumni Association capitalizes on Citizens Academy grads' support

The Citizens Police Academy is adding a new component for past graduates: an alumni association.

The Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association (CPAAA) got its start last year. Sergeant Steve Robinson and Training Unit Administrative Assistant Angela McCune have worked on getting by-laws and reaching out to past classes to engage graduates. They have also attended a national association conference to become certified and learn more about setting up a citizens academy alumni association.

Engagement with past classes has been steady, with 41 graduates joining the CPAAA to-date. The association is a stand-alone entity with its own board, and its goal is to secure nonprofit status.

Current board member Patrick Hasenjager and History Committee Chair, Rhonda Richardson, have been grateful for the opportunity to help the department at events and graduations.

"We're here to help and support the department anyway we can," Hasenjager said.

The association not only helps with events but also brings in speakers and educational opportunities for members.

Richardson says having the knowledge about the department can help with conversations around KCPD. The link between what is happening at the department and the association comes from having board members from each patrol zone connect with the Community Interaction Officers and having regular meetings.

Richardson understands that the association can help build support for police in the community.

"I have a passion for what law enforcement does," Richardson said. "... Sometimes there is just not enough positive support and the association starts to help fill that gap."

Hasenjager echoes the same sentiment and agrees that if the association can help convince one community member that the police are not bad people, he's done his job.

Alumni who are interested in joining the association can reach out to kcmocpaaa@gmail.com and find out more information and how to pay dues, which are \$20 for the first year and \$10 each year after. Department members who would like to request the volunteer support of association members can contact Angela McCune at the Academy.



Graduates of the KCPD Citizens Police Academy, like this class that graduated on May 15, can now continue their support of the department by being part of the Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association.

Upcoming Events

July 23-27
Youth Academy at
South Patrol

August 14
Board of Police
Commissioners Meeting

August 25
Movie Night at South
Patrol

The Informant is a
publication of KCPD's
Media Unit
(816) 234-5170
www.kcpd.org

Officially Speaking

Awards

Certificates of Appreciation
Kansas City Chiefs, Mr. Ramzee
Robinson and Mr. B.J. Stabler

Life-Saving Award and Certificate
of Appreciation
Officer Nathan Magers and Mr.
Jay Waldo

Life-Saving Award
Officer Ross Davis

25-Year Rings

Human Resources Specialist Toni
Browning
Human Resources Specialist
Donna Jones
Communications Specialist Lynn
Rossbach

Retirements

Sergeant Catherine Kozal
Officer Charles Chambers
Officer Jimmie Frank, Jr.
Officer Karen Jenkins
Officer Stephen Solomon
Human Resources Specialist
Donna Jones

Obituary

Retired Civ. Yvette McAllinster

The mission of the
Kansas City Missouri Police
Department is to protect and
serve with professionalism,
honor and integrity.